Newspapers by Ancestry
https://www.newspapers.com/image/312399540/

Lauri Hopple is no calendar girl but she enjoys surveying the 1986 calendar scene.

Local folks' calendars keep you up to date

Stories by Linda Ulrich

Photo by Ted Kirk

Move over Don Johnson. The calendar based on NBC's "Miami Vice" may be hot, but other calendars — Nebraska natives, so to speak — also are warmly received here.

Although some appeal only to Nebraskans (or perhaps former Nebraskans), one of them, Cat Lovers Against the Bomb, is sold internationally.

As the title suggests, Cat Lovers Against the Bomb combines cats with peace and social justice issues. Hence, the "never cat" in Theo, lounging beneath a sign that says "This house has NO fallout shelter. Peace is our only security."

The calendar features black-and-white pictures of cats — mostly local felines — accompanied by quotations, including some by poets such as the late e e cummings, Denise Levertov, Marge Piercy and Adrienne Rich.

The phases of the moon are marked on a cat's face. Dates note either "cat history or peace history." For instance, June 13, 1952, is the day a cat named Dusty gave birth to her 420th kitten, while on that same day in 1982 nearly a million people demonstrated in New York City for nuclear disarmament.

Cat Lovers Against the Bomb is an informal group of cat-loving peace workers and feline companions that began meeting in Lincoln on Nov. 28, 1982. Formation of the group was inspired by a "Cat Lovers Against the Bomb" button from England, which a friend gave to DeCourcy Squire, calendar editor.

"Our major project is the yearly Cat Lovers Against the Bomb calendar," Squire said. With the calendar, "we share with others the beauty of our cat friends; note amazing cat deeds, funny cat lovers, peace workers and justice seekers; commemorate the ups and downs of the struggle for peace and justice; raise funds to help the work of Nebraskans for Peace."

The 1986 calendar is the third the group has compiled. The first two were typewritten and printed locally, but this year's is being published by New Society Publishers, a small Philadelphia press specializing in peace and social justice publications.

New Society Publishers distributed 5,000 copies of the calendar and is printing 3,000 additional copies, Squire says. Nebraskans for Peace will receive royalties from calendar sales. The calendars have been distributed internationally, including in Australia and England.

Calendar readers are invited to submit suggestions for quotations or dates for next year's calendars. They also may submit black-and-white photographs of cats.

"We still have a few openings for calendars," Squire says.

The calendar retails for $5.95 and can be obtained locally at Avant Card, B. Dalton Bookseller, Dirt Cheap, Helping Hands Handcrafts, Nebraska Bookstore and the Nebraskans for Peace office.

Another calendar, Images of Nebraska, focuses on Nebraska artists. Printed on 100 percent recycled paper, the calendar was printed and paid for by Citizens for Environmental Improvement, the Small Farms Action Group and the Nebraska State Recycling Association.

This is the second year the calendar has been published. "We wanted to promote recycled paper and also represent the artists in Nebraska," says Tom Hansen, manager of Citizens for Environmental Improvement, a non-profit recycling operation in Lincoln.

More than 400 letters were mailed to artists throughout the state asking them to submit work for the calendar. About 130 artists responded. "It was difficult to select the art, but we made the decision based on how well the work would reproduce and how it fit in the monthly scheme," Hansen says.

The artists donated the use of their work, which included woodcuts, acrylics, and pencil and pen-and-ink drawings. Some of the works are accompanied by quotations or poems. October, for instance, features "Horizon 305/View from Bennet to Palmyra," a reproduction of an acrylic by Lincoln artist Anne Burkholder accompanied by a poem, "The Exquisite Beauty of Southeastern Nebraska" by Nebraska State Poet William Kloefkorn, also of Lincoln.

The calendar is $5.95 and may be purchased at Avant Card, B. Dalton Bookseller, J & L Lee Booksellers, the Capitol gift shop, the Unitarian Church and Waldenbooks.

Feeding on the "immense popularity" of his book "Inside Lincoln," University of Nebraska English and anthropology professor Roger Welsch has compiled the "Inside Lincoln" calendar.

This marks the fourth calendar he and his wife, Linda, have published through their corporation, Plains Heritage. Past calendars were statewide in scope but, Welsch said, "our Nebraska calendars haven't done so well. I guess people outside of the city limits don't care about dates."

Besides, he adds, "we do the calendars mostly for fun — they're not a great moneymaker — and we had such fun with 'Inside Lincoln' we decided to do the Lincoln calendar."

The calendar features humorous drawings of Lincoln scenes by Welsch's sister-in-law, Lee Cummins Hotovy, and essays expounding things to do to make "life in Lincoln even happier than it normally is."

Welsch's most "unfavorite month" is March, he says. "I loathe March. You always think it's going to be spring, but you're still in the bowels of winter. I had a woman from Davey tell me once 'It's not Nebraska's winters that are so tough; it's those 87 days of March.'"

The calendar sells for $3.95 and is available at most local bookstores and the Bennett Martin Public Library Heritage Room.

A Date with Nebraska History, 1986, features, as the name suggests, Nebraska historical photographs and dates. Retailing for $5.95, the calendar is published by a Wyoming company, Calendars Unlimited. It can be bought at several local bookstores.

Also available at local bookstores are the Husker calendar, which features black-and-white photographs of Big Red, and the Men of Nebraska and Women of Nebraska calendars, which have pictures of University of Nebraska-Lincoln students. The Husker calendar is $5.95; the two others are $6.95 each.

The classic of locally produced calendars is the NEBRASKAland calendar. The first one, developed in 1965 as part of NEBRASKAland magazine, sold for 50 cents. This year's edition is $4. About 35,000 copies are printed annually, according to Liz Huff, publications editor.

Through the years, the format has remained much the same. Beautiful color photographs by the prize-winning NEBRASKAland magazine photographers highlight the calendar. For the first time, this year's edition includes two or three Nebraska history notes on each month's pages.

"Our calendar is pretty much the only one on the market that features Nebraska exclusively," Huff says.

Nowadays, there's a calendar for all of us

This is the annual calendar story.

If you believe, as Ben Hecht did, that time is "a circus always packing up and moving away," you probably will find a calendar of little use in trying to keep track of time.

But most of us are at least somewhat dependent on the calendars adorning our desks, walls and wrists.

For centuries, calendars for personal use were reserved only for a learned few. As printing techniques became more sophisticated and people became more literate, personal use of calendars increased, according to the Smithsonian News Service.

Almanacs, which included embellished calendars, became fashionable in the 18th century, but calendars did not become a separate entity until the 19th century. By the second half of the 19th century, the average American family could have any number of calendars on the wall — all of which were free. The calendar, the Victorians found,

See CALENDAR on page 2D

Beautician's stories spun into gold

NEW CASTLE, Pa. (AP) — When her customers talk, Sylvie F. Sommerfield listens.

She runs the Westgate Beauty Salon, where the gossip often turns to faltering marriages, agonizing affairs, or the travails of raising children.

From that chitchat while cutting and curling hair, Mrs. Sommerfield fashions historical romance novels.

"As a beautician, believe me, you hear all the stories," says Sommerfield, a 54-year-old grandmother. "People tell their doctor, their psychologist and their beautician everything."

Since 1979, Sommerfield has turned out 13 romance novels, creating characters out of her customers. More than 4 million copies of her books are in print, boosting her income to six figures a year. Currently she's under contract with Zebra Books to write another 13 novels, heady stuff for a beautician who hoped only "to make a little side money."

"Isn't it wonderful?" she asks during an interview at her new office at Sommerfield Enterprises Inc., a few doors from her beauty salon. "Could you ask for a better thing than this? To get paid and learn to do better what you really enjoy doing in the first place.

"Once in a while, somebody will laugh and say, 'Please don't put that in a book.' But nobody has really said anything about it. They've been pretty good."

Encouraged by her father, an avid reader and self-taught historian, Sommerfield developed an early fondness for literature while growing up on a western Pennsylvania farm. She went to work for an insurance agency after graduating from high school in 1949 because "money was very, very tight in our family."

During her spare time, she "played around" writing short stories and poetry. But all her literary efforts were set aside when she married John Fusco in 1953 and had two children.

"I just devoted myself to being a wife and mother."

Twenty years ago the bored housemaker took over Westgate Beauty Salon from her brother-in-law. She obtained a hairdresser's license a few years later and soon was managing a staff of up to five stylists and a clientele of more than 100 customers a day.

"But always in the back of my mind was the fact that I wanted to be a writer," she says.

It was in mid-1978, at age 47, that she decided to write a book at her husband's urging.

By the end of 1979, Sommerfield had produced three 600-page novels in her spare time. The manuscripts were rejected by several publishers before being accepted by New York's Zebra Books, which publishes romances, adventures, Westerns and Gothics as well as mainstream novels.

Leslie Gelbman, Zebra's editorial director, recalls thinking, "This woman has talent and I think we can develop her into a best-selling author." Before the paperback books could be released, however, Sommerfield was forced to undergo surgery in March 1980 because of a cranial aneurysm. Despite a long, painful recovery, she managed to write two more novels by the end of the year.

Her first book, "Erin's Ecstasy," was released by Zebra in October 1980. "Tazia's Torment" appeared in November, followed by "Rebel Pride" in December.

Sommerfield was "in total shock" when she got a multibook contract offer from Zebra. Her next two novels fared just as well, with sales averaging 70,000 copies on each of the books' first printings.

Her 12th novel, "Savage Kiss," was released this fall. The 13th, "Captive Embrace," is due out in April.

A main theme in all of Sommerfield's books is commitment, according to Kathe Robin, a reviewer for Romantic Times, a bimonthly trade publication in Brooklyn Heights, N.Y.

AP NEWSFEATURES PHOTO

Sylvie Sommerfield creates characters and plots for her romance novels by listening to the stories of her beauty salon customers.

"She's able to pair up more characters happily-ever-after than any other author in the genre," says Robin, who estimates there are 600 to 700 romance novelists in the United States.

"When you read Ms. Sommerfield's books, you feel a deep sense of commitment that the characters have for each other ... the commitment that we all make in our lives every single day."

Sommerfield gets 10 to 15 letters a day from readers around the world who "love her endings," says her husband, a financial investor who retired in 1980 to manage his wife's career.

Sommerfield says her books, most of which are set in 18th and 19th century America, are neither "glitzy" pieces designed to shock nor historical treatises aimed to educate.

"Historical romance reading is escapism," she says. "I am entertaining."

Sommerfield says a few people have commented, "Oh, you write THOSE books." But, she says, "I don't write anything I'm ashamed of. I keep it (sex) as clean as possible ... the context is love, honor, respect and marriage."

Because of her increasingly busy writing career, Sommerfield is spending less time these days at the beauty salon. She's whittled her workload down to about a dozen longtime customers and plans to turn the business over to an employee at the end of the year.

She still lives in the century-old home in nearby Edinburg where her husband was born and she still enjoys darning socks, baking bread, canning jellies and baby-sitting her grandchildren.

Sommerfield rates her health and family far above her writing and monetary gains. Her 1980 operation, she said, opened her eyes.

"You don't live in a fantasy world any more after that. It jolts you to the point where you realize, life doesn't end up like this all the time," she said, holding up one of her novels. "But if you want to relax and enjoy it, why not let it happen between the pages of a book."

Suffering chronic in tiny Belize

By Cheryl B. Chapman

CRIQUE SARCO, Belize (UPI) — Every year volunteer medical teams from Amigos Internacionales travel from the United States to tiny, impoverished Belize where the care available is sporadic and the suffering chronic.

Dr. David Nichols, a dentist from Tyler, Texas, has had his share of frustrations during trips to the multiracial Central American democracy.

"You're not going down there to cure all the deformities in the country," he said. "You're going to get the pus out of their mouths."

The pathway that reaches from Texas to Belize is paved by philanthropy.

"In 1982 a group of men in Athens, Texas, formed an interdenominational philanthropic organization — Amigos Internacionales," said Dr. Kerfoot Walker, director of the Tyler-Smith County Health Department, which coordinates the expeditions.

"In early 1979, we struck an agreement with the government of Belize promising them regular — but intermittent — dental and medical service."

Because medical supplies are hard to come by in Belize, the Amigos take along everything they can cajole from U.S. drug companies.

Amigos sent 12 medics to Belize this year: Dr. George Skipworth, Columbus, Ga.; Nichols, Dr. Tom Cooper, Dr. Jim Holton, Dr. Ernest Brady, Dr. Andrew Quiroz, surgical nurse Loraine Jewett, nurse anesthetist Bill O'Neal, and medical assistants Debbie Morris and Carolyn Jones, all of Tyler; Dr. Mike Kennebrew, New Orleans; and medical assistant Cheryl Chapman, Dallas, who also is a UPI reporter.

The group split: Skipworth, Brady, Nichols, Morris, Jones and Chapman continuing to the jungle and Holton, Kennebrew, Quiroz, Cooper, O'Neal and Jewett staying at the hospital in Belize City.

The trip by dugout from Punta Gorda to the interior Mayan jungle village of Crique Sarco took five hours, a long time to sit motionless on a narrow wooden boat seat.

The medics began work immediately as twilight fell.

Wingard accompanied Skipworth, Brady and Nichols to the thatched hut of the Choc family. Candalaria Choc was having problems in the final week of her ninth pregnancy, but she refused to leave her husband and eight children to get care.

Choc's husband, stricken with malaria, lay passively in his hammock. The dusty room stank of fever and chickens trailed in and out through the door.

Nichols said most of the Indians'

See BELIZE on page 2D

Copyright © 2026 Newspapers.com. All Rights Reserved.